

METHODS OF PSYCHIC
DEVELOPMENT

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METHODS OF PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

BY
IRVING S. COOPER

WITH A FOREWORD
By C. W. LEADBEATER

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FOREWORD

THERE is great need in the present day for a series of books such as this. The era of blank materialism has happily passed away—the time when man had the incredible impudence to proclaim with blatant self-satisfaction that the illimitable ocean of the power and wisdom of the Deity was identical with the insignificant teaspoonful of more or less inaccurate information which he himself happened to possess at the moment. Men recognise now the existence of a world which transcends their physical senses, and they want to know something about it.

In answer to this demand has sprung up a luxuriant crop of literature. This is chiefly of two kinds: its books may be classified under the heads of New Thought and Spiritualism. Books of the former type are usually based chiefly upon the personal experience of the writers as to the power of thought and the importance of the

unseen; the latter embody information which is generally also the result of individual experience, but in this case it is the experience of men who have shuffled off the mortal coil and are altruistically anxious to share their discoveries with their fellows who are still in prison. All these have their value, and a very great value, just because they represent actual personal experience instead of a mere repetition at tenth-hand of unverifiable orthodox tradition; but they have their drawbacks also, for it is obvious that a single untrained and unscientific observer may fall into the most serious errors.

There is a school of thought whose members have for many years devoted themselves to the scientific study of these matters, preparing themselves for such study by arduous and life-long training along special lines. Careful collation of the results of such investigations has established the truth of a number of laws of nature, which are found to be in perfect accordance with the latest discoveries of modern science, and yet to explain and rationalise much of

the previously misunderstood teaching of ancient faiths. In that school the writer of these books is a student, and his endeavour has been to present to his readers some part of what he has learnt, putting it in language so plain and untechnical as to give them in a few hours the benefit of what it has taken him years of labour to acquire. As an older student of the same school, I heartily recommend his works to those who are fortunate enough to be interested in these matters, and to desire reliable information about them.

C. W. LEADBEATER

PREFACE

IN this little manual an attempt has been made to express in clear and simple language free from technical terms, the laws, practices and results of psychic development. Though intended primarily for those who are commencing their studies in occultism, it may be of assistance in systematising the thinking of older students and in serving as an outline in which details gained by deeper investigation may be placed. The statements made are facts, not theories, as they are based upon researches by those whom I have reason to believe are the most advanced clairvoyants of our modern times. This book is sent out into the world with the earnest wish that a knowledge of the facts it contains may not only save many from harm but may lead some nearer to the Light Eternal which dwells in every man.

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA.

I. S. C.

METHODS OF PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I

A WORLD-WITHIN A WORLD

WHERE IS HEAVEN?

AN imperishable intuition has ever warned mankind that this world is only an ante-chamber to a larger one. Even the dogmatic materialism of the last century and the foggy speculations of orthodox theology through many centuries have not been able to stamp it out and make humanity really believe either that heaven was a myth or that it was situated in some remote region among the stars. Poets have dreamed and sung of the glories of this realm, philosophers have argued about its reality, scientists have denied its existence, and

occultists have found it, described it, and carefully classified its inhabitants and phenomena.

While accurate knowledge concerning this larger world and its subdivisions is steadily becoming more wide-spread, yet a dark cloud of popular ignorance and misconception still overshadows our happiness and checks the growth of trust in the goodness and utter wisdom of the divine plan.

To ask the average man "Where is heaven?" would startle him either into amusement or amazement at the oddity of the question. If he had been reading what is called New Thought literature, undoubtedly he would promptly reply that heaven was within one's own heart, a true but little understood stock phrase; but the layman, who had only read his Bible and listened to Sunday sermons, would probably answer—when he had recovered from the shock of such an unexpected query and had collected his confused thoughts sufficiently to remember what he had been told—that heaven might be up there, pointing to the sky where perhaps the planet Mars was wheeling overhead.

But let us imagine that in some mysterious way we were both transported a moment later to that distant planet and that the same question had been asked. Would not the answer be the same? Only this time it might be the planet Earth that was speeding overhead through the starlit vault. Why do we ever try to banish heaven, and insist that it is anywhere except here?

THE UNSEEN WORLD

The occultist, or student of the hidden laws of nature, knows that a larger though normally unseen world englobes our earth, and that we need not visit other celestial bodies or voyage through interstellar space to find it. We are living on a world within a world, the latter extending out around us on all sides like a vast atmosphere. Wherever we may be it envelopes us, fills our mind, permeates our very body and the earth upon which we walk. We cannot go to this subtle realm; we are *now* inhabitants of that world, though unconscious of its presence and of the countless creatures, human beings and other intelligences who live within its borders.

Birth is the act of a human being of this larger world taking a physical body for the gaining of more experience; normal death is the casting aside of a worn-out body after it has served its purpose. This subtler world is our true home; the earth a foreign land to which we make periodical visits, even as a traveller might go to another country to obtain materials which later would be woven into strange and beautiful fabrics.

We are normally unaware of the existence of this larger world because certain senses in us have not yet been awakened. If a person, whose sense of smell had been destroyed by a severe cold, entered a room filled with the delicate fragrance of a lovely rose, he would be unconscious of that odour. If a man, who was colour-blind to green, should walk in a grove of rustling palms or over a velvety lawn, all the wealth of beautiful colour would be lost to him, for everything would appear grey to his defective eyesight.

In a similar way the great majority of the race is insensitive to the vibrations of

the larger world of life and beauty around us, and so unaware of its presence, not because such a region does not exist, but because the sweep of evolution has not yet carried humanity to that stage where the necessary sense-organs are active. But we are not far from that level of development.

OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE

If, through the agency of some great news bureau, we could collect each day the experiences of every person in the world which point to the existence of a psychic realm, it would not be many days before we became convinced of its reality. As individuals our experiences are rare and not conclusive; as a mass the evidence is overwhelming. Perhaps an interesting dream or vision comes to us; we remember it for a time and tell a friend or two; we may even speculate a little regarding its significance and rationale, but after a few months it has faded from mind. Naturally this single incident is of small value and does not tell us much. But when we read collections of psychic experiences, such as have been compiled by the

various societies for psychical research, we see that humanity as a whole is in touch with some vast and complex psychic domain.

Flashes of clairvoyant vision, telling of distant scenes; premonitions of coming disaster; ghosts and apparitions haunting places familiar to them in life; logical dreams which afterwards turn out to be true; the down-rush of vivid thought or feeling which reveals the genius or the hero: all these and many more are phenomena which hint that man is greater than he seems, that the earth is embedded in a mightier sphere. One need not be psychic to convince oneself of the existence of this larger world.

ITS SUBTLE INFLUENCES

The subtle influences of this realm are playing upon us throughout the entire span of life. Every moment other people's thoughts and emotions impinge upon our mind and persuade us to think and feel and act in ways foreign to our own true nature. Usually we do not notice them, regarding all ideas which appear in the brain as of our own creation.

An episode happened to me some years ago which brought home this fact with startling clearness. One day, as I sat quietly reading a book while crossing San Francisco Bay on a ferry-boat, my mind was suddenly flooded with a sense of fear and desperate excitement. I was astonished at this, because the book was most sedate, but when I glanced up the mystery was solved. I saw a mother running swiftly across the deck to stop her little child from climbing over the rail and falling into the water. The agitated emotions which thrust themselves into my consciousness were generated in her mind and not in mine.

There are few original thinkers; the thoughts of most people are usually abstracted from the thought-currents which swirl about us. We do not think unto ourselves; each thought we generate is added to the stock of thoughts held in common by humanity. The wise man is he who so attunes his mind that it will respond only to the highest and receive only the noblest and the most refined.

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Then he becomes a filter separating the clear water of spiritual thought from the impurities of passion and desire.

ITS UTTER REALITY

It is difficult for us, immersed as we are in material life, to realise the utter reality of this larger world which we cannot see, hear, taste, smell or feel because of the limitations of our physical senses. And yet that world is more intensely real than this, though its delicate vibrations leave quite untouched the sluggish matter of our physical sense-organs.

We have all noticed that during a certain portion of each month the moon is visible in the sky during the day. Often we have glanced at its snowy crescent without a thought that all about us its light was falling; we saw only the brilliant sunshine. But when the sun had painted the clouds in the west, and then had gathered in his rays and vanished, we found the landscape bathed in delicate moonlight. The soft radiance from the moon had been there all the time, but we could not see it during the day.

And so it is, with the radiance of the unseen world; it is here now, but unsensed because we are fully concerned with outward impressions and things. When we learn to still our physical senses, when we can calm our restless thinking, then the doorway opens and we catch a glimpse of the light and the guests within.

SLEEP AND DREAMS

Fortunately we know more about this realm than we suspect, for each night while our physical body is asleep we move among its varied scenes, clothed in a subtle counterpart of the physical form called the astral body, which is built of the matter of the unseen world and luminous with a living light all its own. To the occultist sleep is not a mystery. So long as we identify ourselves with the physical body we wear, so long as mind is considered to be the product of chemical action in the brain, just so long shall we be unable to understand what happens when we go to sleep.

It is all very simple; we leave our body as the brain becomes unconscious and

float or move about in the invisible astral world surrounding us. Our consciousness is the same; the garment through which it works alone is different. During our absence the instinctive life which animates the physical body feeds the hungry and tired cells, stimulates the growth of new ones and gathers up the waste products preparatory to casting them forth from the system. Thus, while deserted, the body has an opportunity to recover strength and to rest, but when we return and it 'awakes,' the cells are forced to respond to our thoughts and emotions and to obey our will; naturally they become fatigued after a time because of the constant strain upon them. The reason why sleep is so restful to the body is because we are away from it.

brain or waking consciousness with the wider consciousness which we use in this inner world, then we become what is called psychic, for true psychic development expands the limits of the mind and unfolds certain powers latent in every human being.

CHAPTER II

WHY WE ARE NOT PSYCHIC

THE VEIL WHICH BLINDS

WHEN once we realise that there is an invisible astral world immediately surrounding us, that we are consciously active there every night while our body sleeps, and that the only reason we do not remember our experiences, is because our brain and nervous system are insensitive, then the veil which blinds our vision seems of gossamer thinness, and we long to tear it aside, to break it, to get rid of it in any way so that we may see. But we should take heed that our eager thirst for knowledge does not lead us into grave difficulties. There must be some good reason why mankind *as a whole* is not psychic, for profound Wisdom has established, and Intelligence guides, the laws of nature.

Not long ago my Indian servant brought me a beautiful lotus bud, still glistening with the dew of night and opened just enough to suggest the rosy treasure of colour which lay within. I told him to put it into water, and he, in his eagerness to please me, forced open the tender coverings and laid bare the heart of the sacred flower. A few hours later when I returned to my room, I found the lovely petals all brown and withered, despite the water in which the stem was placed.

If we force our budding psychic faculties too soon or use methods which are unwise, we too may wither and fade before our time. It is not well to tamper with the delicate nervous system or experiment with the brain. A misdirected effort, an overstrain, and some part of the complicated mechanism snaps and we are useless wrecks for life. We should know exactly what we are doing before attempting to awaken our latent forces; we should clearly understand the method and the results it is intended to produce, otherwise harm may come to us.

confiding public. And thousands of people are following their instructions, unaware—until too late—of the danger which they bring.

The manufacture of modern explosives is exceedingly dangerous, and few of us would be willing to take up such an occupation without first carefully studying the whole subject and finding out what the best authorities had to say about each step of the process. But for some mysterious reason a man usually considers himself omniscient when it comes to dangerous practical psychism; his confidence in his discernment is unlimited, his judgment infallible—from ignorance. Perhaps that is the reason why pitiable psychic wrecks abound in western lands.

BALANCE AND COMMON-SENSE

When investigating psychic matters we should use the same balance and common-sense that we apply in all our business affairs. We should subject a psychic communication to the same careful scrutiny and analysis that we employ when examining the contents of an important

letter. There is no necessity to bow the knee in uncalled-for reverence; rather we should stand squarely upon our feet using all the power of reasoning that we possess.

I know of several cases in which intelligent men had apparently lost all their capacity to think clearly and soberly so far as psychism was concerned, after being caught in a whirl of phenomena. They magnified ordinary dreams into marvellous visions, regarded the reaction of their own unregulated thoughts as the diabolical work of black magicians, and were utterly convinced that the platitudes of an inward voice were messages from some mighty Master. It usually takes a year or two before such people recover their normal balance, and it is far better never to permit oneself to adopt such an attitude.

‘KNOW THYSELF’

There are legitimate and illegitimate methods, wise and unwise practices, and the man who really wishes to succeed should follow that admonition quoted by Socrates, which was carved over the entrance of

letter. There is no necessity to bow the knee in uncalled-for reverence; rather we should stand squarely upon our feet using all the power of reasoning that we possess.

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‘KNOW THYSELF’

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the temple of the oracle of Delphi—‘Know Thyself!’

And really to know oneself takes years of deep, calm study—yes, and of service to others, for only when we serve and give do the inner powers open to the light. There are depths in human nature which we have not fathomed, there are latent forces of which we are ignorant, there are powers of whose magnitude we have no conception, there are realms which we can reach of which now we do not even dream, and the occultist—if he be worthy of the name—will not falter before any obstacle in his search for such wisdom. To gain it will be to achieve the goal of all these many lives on earth which we have lived.

PREMATURE PSYCHISM

There *is* a very good reason why we are not psychic. The quickest way to ruin the average man of the world would be to make him sensitive to the forces and influences of the astral world. Nature is wise, however, and *if her laws are followed* does not permit this until we are able to cope with these forces and control them.

Premature psychic development is not at all to be desired, and leads only to unhappiness and misery.

If we have not mastered the lessons of this world, if we have not developed courage, steadfastness, power, unselfishness, purity, wisdom, love, why should we seek to explore the next? We should be as foolish as a traveller who plunged into the heart of darkest Africa without sufficient equipment. It is better to be honest with ourselves and admit that we are not ready, than to try and then fail through lack of preparation.

ASTRAL INFLUENCES

One of the most terrible influences before which one cursed with premature psychism is practically helpless, is that exerted by an evil man after the death of his body. We flatter ourselves that by executing a criminal we stop him from doing harm. Well, men do not suddenly become saint-like when they die, nor do they depart to some distant region. Those who have lived good and wholesome lives find themselves after death upon the higher.

levels of the invisible world; but on the other hand, the lowest astral levels—those which lie nearest the earth—are crowded with debased members of our own humanity: brutal ruffians, vile sensualists and bestial profligates. In order to gratify their burning passions and wild desires they frequently try to obsess intoxicated men and drive them into all sorts of excesses. Premature psychism throws one open to such influences and usually the helpless, untrained psychic has a very bad time of it.

Another reason why nature is so careful not to give psychic faculties to unprepared people is that we are constantly surrounded by sub-human creatures which are on the whole antagonistic to humanity. Since, however, they live in the unseen world, it is impossible for them to injure a man unless in some way he throws himself open to them; but if he does so through his haste to become psychic, then the lesson he learns is bitter indeed.

We must also never forget that with psychic training comes increased sensitiveness

to the thoughts, emotions and passions cast out into the astral atmosphere by the swarming millions of human beings who cover the earth and crowd together into cities. We are actually living within a sea of thought-images born from the ceaselessly active minds of others, and unless our minds are controlled and obedient, we are victimised by unwelcome mental visitors. This sensitiveness becomes a positive nightmare to one who has blundered into psychism, because the thoughts and passions which cluster and swirl about a city are usually selfish, greedy, materialistic, sensual, deceitful, revengeful, only here and there being relieved by the pure and glowing colours of unselfish love and aspiration.

THE PROTECTIVE WEB

And now we come to one of the most interesting discoveries that have been made by occultists—the simple but effective method by which nature prevents the premature awakening of psychic faculties.

Those who have experimented with electricity know that if the ends of two wires both charged with current are coated with

wax, no current will pass when the insulated ends are brought together. But if the wax is removed or even if a tiny hole be made in it, a spark will at once leap across.

And so with the psychic mechanism in man. In the subtle astral form and in the etheric part of the physical body there are several centres which are so arranged that each astral centre almost touches its corresponding physical centre. If some of the forces of the unseen world were to play through these astral centres upon their physical counterparts, the man would become prematurely psychic and liable to obsession.

But nature has skilfully shut off this untimely awakening by throwing a thin web of atomic physical matter between each set of centres, which effectually prevents any current leaping across and establishing a circuit. This web is formed of a single layer of atoms, tightly compressed, and charged with a special type of vital force. The life-forces which sustain the body can pass through it without difficulty, but all other forces are barred unless the web is broken.

Unfortunately some of the methods most popular among the would-be occultists in the West are just those which work the greatest injury upon this insulating web; perhaps this is one of the reasons for the increase of insanity.

A STERN REALITY

Psychic development has long been studied in India and in certain occult schools, and during the course of many centuries has been elaborated into an exact science. The haphazard style of training, so characteristic of those studying occultism in Europe and America, is wholly unthought of among those who know that psychism is not an interesting fad but a stern reality, by which much good can be accomplished by those who are properly trained and qualified, but also much harm in the hands of unworthy persons.

A genuine occultist would no more think of teaching a selfish and impure man to become psychic than he would of putting dynamite into the hands of a child. Not only would such a man injure himself and handicap his evolution for many lives

CHAPTER III

PSYCHIC COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHERS

By TELEPATHY—FROM THE LIVING

ALL thoughts which come to us, either from our own minds or the minds of others, are in a very true sense communications from the unseen world, for that is the realm in which thoughts and emotions are born. The ideas and feelings which appear in our brain are merely faint reproductions in heavy physical matter of far more powerful mental vibrations which flood all space about us like waves from a wireless telegraph.

Each brain is a receiving station. We are all familiar with the well-established fact that thoughts and emotions can flash from mind to mind without the mediation of speech, but perhaps we hardly realise to what a large extent the ideas which

to come, but he would also bring harm to others upon whom he tried to work his selfish will.

The training leading to advanced psychism is free from danger, but the man who follows that path must be earnest, patient, unselfish and emphatically one who 'means business.'

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snappish when some one near us is irritated; in these and in countless other cases we are largely reproducing the emotions and thoughts of others.

THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE

What should be our attitude when we understand that many of our periods of gloom, depression or elation are caused by the company we are with or by the attitude of some one near us or with whom we are in close sympathy? Be positive; it is not difficult to cast off such feelings and reject such thoughts when they seek to creep into our minds. Say firmly to yourself:

"These thoughts are not mine. I have no reason to feel depressed or unhappy; why should I let these feelings dominate me? Get out, I will not have you. I *am* filled with happiness and joy and love for others. I *am* embodied sunshine, a portion of the divine." Such an attitude is always effective.

BY TELEPATHY—FROM THE DEAD

Thoughts and feelings may be telepathed to us not only from the living but also

from those we call the dead, for the death of the physical body does not affect the mind.

One of the first things for us to grasp, if we wish to understand the rationale of psychic communication, is that when a man dies he is not suddenly isolated from his friends. Though we cannot see him because our eyes do not respond to the vibrations of his world, he can still see us for some time after his death—usually for several years, until he has passed to the higher or mental levels of the larger world—and he is just as much interested in our welfare as before.

Indeed, each night while our body is asleep we are with him, and may exchange ideas as freely as of old. But even while we are awake a loving thought will fly to him as a winged messenger of joy, and in turn a strong thought from him may enter our mind just as readily as a thought from our next-door neighbour. In this way many thoughts are received, though we are quite unaware that they are communications from the unseen world.

INSPIRATION

Sometimes it happens that when a lecturer or a preacher is striving earnestly to express helpful ideas to others, a far-advanced human being, busy with his mighty work in the upper regions, will be attracted by his efforts and will send a powerful thought in his direction.

The speaker then becomes inspired. Suddenly into his mind flash clear and brilliant ideas, radiant ideals unfold before his mental vision, his words become rhythmical and beautiful, and sentences of such musical power fall from his lips that his auditors are swept away by the charm of his eloquence and the splendour of his thoughts. Telepathy can be put to no higher use than this.

AUTOMATIC WRITING AND PAINTING

The influence of a man living in the unseen world may go a step further than telepathic impressions. It is possible for him under certain circumstances to secure control of the arm and hand of a living person—through the connecting nerve-centres in the brain—and cause that person to

paint, draw or write as he desires. This is called automatic writing or painting, and is quite a common phenomenon in spiritualistic circles. In this case the movements of the arm take place independently of the consciousness of its owner, because another person is using the hand and thinking out the sentences it is writing or picturing the scenes it is painting.

TRANCE SPEAKING

Continuing this same process to a still greater extent, it is possible for an astral person partially to displace the owner of a physical body, to secure control of the vocal cords, and then to speak to those who are present. This is called *trance speaking*, though when the displacement is partial the medium is not completely entranced, but is usually conscious of what is happening—without the power, however, to check the words which his lips are speaking.

When the owner is entirely displaced and another personality completely occupies his physical body, the medium is seldom aware of what is taking place, nor, when the séance is over, does he recollect any of

the events which have occurred or the words which have been spoken. Under these circumstances the whole appearance of the medium's features may change.

We know how quickly our body responds to every change in mood; when angry, our appearance is quite different from that which we display when plunged in sorrow or filled with happiness. So it happens that when a new personality enters a physical body, the whole expression and even the voice may change, owing to the automatic effort of the body to duplicate the features and mannerisms of that personality.

MATERIALISATION

In still another way it is possible for a man in the astral realm to communicate through the mediation of a living person. If he can draw out from that person's body a certain amount of etheric matter, there are ways by which he can mould that matter into a semblance of a hand and cause physical objects to move, or else wrap it about his astral body and thereby become visible to physical eyes. At

times he is even able to speak through such a form. This act of using etheric matter for purposes of producing physical phenomena is known as materialisation.

As physical objects cannot be moved except by forces working through physical matter, a man who has lost his body through death is quite impotent to produce any physical results whatsoever unless he can either enter the body of another person or materialise himself in etheric matter.

All materialisations are not visible; some are solid, but cannot be seen; some can be seen, but resemble condensed steam in consistency; others are both solid and visible. A solid materialisation is necessary in order to move a physical object.

A person after death looks exactly as he did while in life, only the body he is wearing is built of astral and not of physical matter. Naturally then, when he coats the surface of his astral body with a film of etheric matter, just dense enough to reflect light and become visible, he appears with the same features as when living in his physical body.

During a materialisation it is easy for an inhabitant of the unseen world to impersonate another 'dead' person who is not present at the séance. All the astral man has to do is to think strongly of himself as resembling that person, and immediately the plastic matter of which his subtle body is built is moulded into the likeness of his mental image. In this way many deceptions have been perpetrated at spiritualistic gatherings. Christ, Socrates, Plato, Shakespeare and many another mighty thinker who—it is claimed—have communicated at séances, have greater work to do than to utter such platitudes as have been attributed to them, and all such claims are palpable impersonations to which little attention should be paid by the wise investigator.

SLATE WRITING

Slate writing is but a variant of materialisation. To produce this phenomenon, a bit of pencil is placed between two slates which are then wrapped and sealed. The person in the unseen world who wishes to write on slates prepared in this way, abstracts enough etheric matter from the

medium to enable him to grasp the bit of pencil, and then proceeds to write in the ordinary manner. Ether can pass without the slightest difficulty or opposition through the densest of physical matter, and so an etheric hand could thrust itself through the solid slate with the same ease that we could pass our physical hand through a cloud of smoke.

THE METHOD OF AN OCCULTIST

A trained occultist during the course of his work in the larger world sometimes has occasion to materialise himself in order to give physical help to some person who is in trouble. He never, however, utilises the etheric matter belonging to the body of any living man, but, by a powerful effort of his will, draws round himself from space whatever etheric matter is needed, and moulds this upon the outlines of his astral body into a temporary form through which he can speak and act. The moment, however, that his will relaxes its constraining power, the forcibly condensed ether resolves itself again into its original state, the temporary materialisation vanishes and the occultist once more resumes his work in the unseen world.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIUMSHIP OR PASSIVE TRANSMISSION

A PHYSICAL PECULIARITY

MEDIUMSHIP is possible to a certain type of person because of a peculiarity of his physical body—usually a lack of cohesion between its etheric and other constituents—and of an ability to slip out of his body without much effort. Generally this mediumistic tendency is present at birth in those who later become mediums; but it may also be stimulated by what are commonly known as developing circles.

The possession of this bodily peculiarity does not imply in the least that its possessor is any more advanced than the rest of humanity; in fact, the reverse is usually the case. Mediumship as we see it among us to-day is often the mark of an undeveloped soul, though there have been a few noted exceptions.

Mediumistic development does not extend higher than the physical body; one becomes a medium as soon as that peculiar condition of the body is produced. There is no necessity for a pure and lofty moral character, and generally there is never any attempt to awaken the noble powers of the mind, or to unfold the spiritual nature. The higher side of human nature, which is the expression of the true inner man, is thus oftentimes left entirely untouched.

And yet in some strange way people frequently identify mediumistic development with spiritual growth. Too often has a mere belief in spirits and a life beyond the grave been confused with spirituality; too often has the willingness to listen to moral platitudes been mistaken for moral strength; too often has craving for phenomena been regarded as religious devotion!

TELEGRAMS AND REVELATIONS

It is as sensible to look upon the act of communicating with the unseen world through a medium as a religion, and to regard all such messages as spiritual revelations, as it would be to bow down

and worship at a Marconi receiving station and look upon the telegrams which have flashed across the seas as infallible communications from on high. In both cases a very fallible human being was the sender of the message, though one came through an instrument and the other through a living body.

There is no more spirituality in the fact that a disembodied man can use the body of a medium than in the fact that we can use a telephone. The custom of calling a man a spirit after he has laid aside his physical body has led to much confusion of thought, unnecessary reverence and mistaken confidence. We are as much spirits now as we ever shall be, for death but strips away the body and leaves us as we are.

Worthy old John Smith is just as much of a bore after death as he was before, and even if he does condescend to moralise a little in a stuffy way through the lips of an obliging medium, there is no reason why his statements should receive any more weight than they did when he was in physical incarnation.

We have surrounded death and all that lies beyond with needless awe and mystery. When a medium makes a statement we should receive it in exactly the same way as we should any similar remark made by an acquaintance during a conversation.

VESTAL VIRGINS

Mediumship is one of the most ancient as well as the easiest means of communication between the larger world and this. Both from recorded history and from occult investigation of the past, it is known to have existed thousands of years ago. As the seer turns his illuminated vision far back into the mists of time and glances within the mighty temples of old Atlantis, the vast sanctuaries of ancient Egypt, or the marble fanes of Greece, he finds vestal virgins, sybils, pythonesses, through whose stainless bodies, placed before the altar in the midst of hushed and reverent worshippers, mighty Teachers spoke.

But how different were the conditions then from what they are to-day! Then the daughters of noble families, the virgins whose lips were used by the Teachers, were reared

within the temple walls amidst the purest and most holy surroundings. Their food was carefully chosen, and they were guarded from every evil influence and thought. Because of these precautions there was no danger to the vestal virgins, and great was the gain of those who could listen to the noble truths and far-reaching wisdom of the Great Ones who spoke through their bodies.

The act of leaving one's body and permitting another spiritual person to use it, is not in itself dangerous. Indeed, this is sometimes done by an advanced occultist and Initiate, because he knows exactly who is going to use his body, and during the whole of the time he is clearly conscious of everything that is occurring and being said. As the Teacher speaks such an Initiate stands outside his own body in the astral world and listens and admires.

THE DANGERS OF MODERN MEDIUMSHIP

The dangers which surround modern mediumship and cause the occultist to warn people against its practice, are there because the conditions in which the medium is placed are usually sordid and unhealthy,

and because the medium himself is often so undeveloped that he has no power to select those who shall enter his body. When the average medium withdraws from his body he is not at all active and in many cases he is not even awake in the astral world. His consciousness is so untrained that he frequently drifts about in a dreamy condition, occupied entirely with his own thoughts.

Meantime some astral person, good or bad as the case may be, has slipped into the unoccupied body and is speaking to the awe-stricken listeners. Sometimes, I know, there are present some better informed astral people who are called spirit-guides, and they attempt to direct the performance and protect the medium. But since they are ordinary people like ourselves, they are neither all-powerful nor all-wise.

When we remember that the unseen world (especially those levels nearest the earth with which the ordinary medium is usually in contact) is crowded with all descriptions of undesirable men and women, it is to be expected that sometimes an astral vagabond, filled with lust and vicious

desires, may thrust his way into the unconscious body of the medium, despite the spirit-guide. What is the result? That body is oftentimes ill-used, and in addition is actually polluted and made magnetically unclean by the very presence of such a filthy creature within it.

Even if the person who enters the body of a medium is only an ordinary type, and not nearly so debased as the one just described, nevertheless a certain amount of pollution may take place, for few men and women are entirely free from passion and selfishness.

IMPURE SURROUNDINGS

And then think of the surroundings of the average public séance for which admission is charged! The people present are seldom refined and unselfish; they are there either out of curiosity or because they want something for themselves. Because they are flesh-eaters and beer-drinkers their very bodies—often unwashed—radiate all sorts of undesirable and harmful influences. And in these days of ignorance, even the medium himself may be in the habit of

eating meat and taking alcoholic liquors, which create such unpleasant magnetic conditions in his body that a developed and sensitive man in the astral world would find it impossible to use it. It would be like putting on the filthy clothes of a tramp.

That is one reason why the general run of communications are of so little value. Advanced people in the unseen world do not attend séances, even when their relatives are present, simply because the surroundings are so often impure and repellant, if not actually vicious and harmful. So their places are taken by more common folk, who delight in trite moralities, and dearly love to play the rôle of spiritual teachers.

IDEAL CONDITIONS

If the conditions themselves were changed; if only those were admitted to such gatherings whose lives were clean, pure and unselfish and whose aspirations were noble; if the medium himself withdrew from worldly pleasures and habits, cleansed his thoughts and took scrupulous care of

alive is seriously diminished, so much so that severe exhaustion oftentimes results. The organs of the body frequently become upset, the heart action is enfeebled and the digestive functions impaired. The strain upon the medium is so terrible that physical prostration and nervous breakdown are apt to follow frequent materialisations. Then too, because of the feeling of utter weakness, stimulants are sometimes taken. Many sad cases of drunkenness have arisen from this very cause.

ETHERIC POLLUTION

When etheric matter is used by an astral man to make himself visible, that matter inevitably absorbs some of the magnetism of the man and takes up some of his rates of vibration. If he is sensual it becomes impregnated with sensuality, if he is cunning it becomes instinct with deceit. Then, when it flows back into the body of the medium after the materialisation is over, it carries with it its degrading influences. On this account also materialisations are undesirable.

Those who attend séances are frequently called upon to furnish a small amount of

etheric matter to add to that of the medium, and so to a lesser degree each one present may become polluted.

OBSESSION

If one were to look at a séance with clairvoyant vision he would see that the room was crowded with astral people who had been attracted by the nature of the meeting. Even though only one or two of them would be able to make themselves visible to the sight of the physical visitors through the agency of the medium, the rest of them are doing what they can to influence the audience. Sometimes they find it possible to break through that insulating web mentioned in a previous chapter, and then the unfortunate person to whom this has happened is at the mercy of the astral man who has done it. If that man wishes, he can partially obsess the unlucky person and make life a hell for him.

When once the web is broken, the natural protection so wisely provided for the ordinary man is gone, and his life becomes a haunted one, upon which any ill-mannered astral tramp may intrude. Such

vagabonds are often desperate and utterly unscrupulous in their mad desire to get somehow or other into touch with physical life once more; so the state of the man who has lost his natural defences may be most pitiable.

Even if the web is not broken it occasionally happens that a visitor to a public séance attracts the attention of some undesirable astral person who follows him home and annoys him whenever possible. This is much to be deplored, especially if there are children at home, for they are more easily influenced than adults. The occultist, therefore, is *not* opposed to mediumship as such, but he does emphatically warn people against the folly of practising it under such undesirable conditions as prevail at present. Private séances are much less objectionable, because those present are usually of a higher type; but even then some danger exists. The ideal conditions are those under which the vestal virgins of older days lived and spoke.

CHAPTER V

THE LARGER CONSCIOUSNESS

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE BRAIN

PSYCHISM is not supernatural; it only implies the opening up of new channels between the brain and the larger consciousness in man. The brain itself does not generate thought; it merely responds to thought-vibrations after they have been aroused by the activity of the mind. Since all mental activity originates in this deeper self—which can exist as well without the brain as with it—it is quite true to say that every thought, emotion and feeling we experience, except those received telepathically by the brain, is a psychic communication from our own larger consciousness.

It is a startling though profoundly interesting fact that what we are in the habit of calling our consciousness is really

only a limited portion of our actual consciousness. The brain is a wonderfully constructed organ and responds exceedingly well to the play of our mind, but it has many limitations, and the extent to which it can reproduce the lightning-like action of thoughts and emotions is much more restricted than we might expect.

Naturally the amount of this restriction varies. The brain consciousness of an ignorant labourer is able to transmit practically every thought he thinks, because his sluggish mind is concerned almost entirely with simple physical matters. But the far greater mentality of a cultured man of wide education is able to express only a small part of its activity through the present type of brain.

CONFUSION OF TERMS

A great deal of confusion has arisen in the minds of students of occultism because different authors have used such terms as unconscious, subconscious, super-conscious, subliminal, objective, subjective, in so many different senses. People actually have come to believe that man has two

separate minds which, to a certain extent, are quite different from each other. Hudson was rather unfortunate in his use and definition of subjective and objective, because what he called the 'objective' mind is really only that part of the much larger 'subjective' mind to which the brain can respond. In no sense are they separate minds working under different laws, nor is the 'subjective' mind the confiding thing which Hudson represents it to be, for it is the man himself.

Of course it is exceedingly difficult to see the facts exactly as they are, when a man is forced through lack of clairvoyant faculty to base all his conclusions only upon such facts as he can observe with his physical senses and reason about with his brain consciousness. But if such investigators make mistakes in their deductions and use terms in an inaccurate and vague way, there is no necessity for us to perpetuate their errors, for that would only lead to misunderstanding and to looseness of thinking. The best authority is that of direct observation.

THE WORKINGS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

What does the occultist who is a trained clairvoyant know about this larger consciousness? He knows that the consciousness of man is one, but that when it works through different types of matter its outward expressions are different.

If we connect wires conveying electricity so that the current passes first through a glass tube containing vapour of mercury, then through a coil of German-silver wire and finally through a magnetic coil or helix, we shall find that this one current produces three distinct and different effects according to the nature of the substance through which it works. The mercury vapour glows with a blue light, the German-silver wire becomes hot, and the helix sends out magnetic lines of force.

So with the human consciousness. When it works in the higher or mental levels of the unseen world it gives rise to thoughts; when it works in the lower or astral levels of that world it produces emotions, desires and passions; when it works in physical matter it becomes what may be called the

automatic consciousness of the body, in which habits reside.

Our brain or waking consciousness has nothing to do with this automatic consciousness; only occasionally does the latter rise into the region of daily thoughts, for it is the true subconscious. Sometimes we see its action, when without thinking we move quickly to avoid a sudden blow. The waking consciousness is that part of the larger consciousness which can find its way down into the brain. All that portion of the mind which normally cannot be expressed in the brain is the superconsciousness.

Thus the occultist analyses the workings of consciousness into three phases—the automatic or subconsciousness, the brain or waking consciousness, and the larger or superconsciousness.

THE AUTOMATIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The automatic consciousness works in and through the sympathetic nervous system and the reflex centres of the cerebro-spinal system. Its duty is to control the cells of the body, to regulate the activity of the different organs and to store up as

memories those little physical acts which we perform without thought. It is the realm of instincts, habits and mannerisms.

The act of writing is an example of its action. When we were first learning to write that painful performance was within our brain consciousness, and we had to think about the formation of each letter. With practice we learn to handle the pen without effort or thought, which means that the operation of tracing the letters has been taken in charge by our automatic consciousness, leaving the brain free to occupy itself with thoughts about what we wish to write.

When one is learning to ride a bicycle the whole of one's brain consciousness is occupied with the problem of how to prevent the contrary machine from running into the sidewalk or a tree. With practice we are able to ride without giving the matter a thought. Not that *we* are not steering and guiding all the time; we are, but the work is done by the subconsciousness and so does not come into our thoughts at all.

It is most amusing as well as instructive to watch an expert bicyclist attempting to ride a tricycle. Naturally the principle of steering is different; instead of swaying the body from side to side as with a bicycle, the handle-bars must be turned in the direction one wishes to go. This is the cause of all the difficulty; although the bicyclist *knows* he ought to turn the handle-bars, he *instinctively* leans over to one side in a vain attempt to make the tricycle go the right way. As a result he usually ends by running into a hedge or ditch.

When once the automatic consciousness has been drilled to make a certain set of motions, it takes time to replace that habit with a new one. It can be done, however, by first thinking of the new habit and then practising it day by day until it has been grasped by the automatic consciousness. The occultist turns this habit-forming faculty to good use in his training.

THE SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

The superconsciousness, as has been stated, consists of those innumerable thoughts and emotions which cannot filter down into

the brain because of its limitations and unresponsiveness. From this larger consciousness flow all the richness of our intellectual life, all the beauty of our emotions, all the power of our spiritual aspirations. Without this superconsciousness man is not truly man; there might still remain a human body, but it would be nothing more than a mere collection of cells. Without the mind the brain would be without a thought.

Sometimes a more vivid communication than usual pours down into the brain from this larger self; such are the flashes of soul-stirring harmony or beauty which come to musician or poet; such the rush of superb courage which makes the hero; such the imperial power which enables a general to rally his dispirited men and lead them to victory; such the inspiration of genius.

MEMORIES OF ASTRAL EXPERIENCES

Sometimes after a night of quiet sleep it is possible for this larger consciousness to impress some of its knowledge upon the brain. The successful accomplishment of this, however, is not common, because the

consciousness, it is possible under certain circumstances to gain a knowledge of future events and to impress some picture of that future upon our brain as a vision seen on waking.

If we stood upon the summit of a hill round the base of which curved a single railway track, and saw two trains approaching each other from opposite directions along this track, we should be able to foretell the exact spot at which, and almost the exact moment when, the collision would occur, though no one on board the two trains would have the slightest knowledge of this future event.

It may be that, while in the astral world, we are able to overlook human events as if we stood upon a mountain and in this way now and then catch a glimpse of the future.

TAPPING THE LARGER CONSCIOUSNESS

When we have so purified our body and developed our brain and nervous system that it becomes very responsive to the vibrations of the larger consciousness, there awakens in us what is called clairvoyance.

This psychic faculty is entirely the result of individual capacity; it is a power of the man himself, and must not be confused in any way with mediumship. A medium is merely a passive transmitter for the thoughts of others, while a clairvoyant is an active agent exercising his own faculties.

There are two historical methods of developing clairvoyance. One—known in India as Hatha Yoga or ‘Union by Effort’—reduces the physical body to a quiescent state by means of certain physical exercises, until its sense-organs become dull and inactive and no longer respond to physical vibrations. This method, because it deals with the physical body alone, awakens only primitive clairvoyance and leaves the higher powers of man quite untouched.

The other method—called Raja Yoga or ‘Royal Union’—develops the mind, emotions and spiritual nature to such an extent, that by steady unwavering concentration it is possible to withdraw the consciousness from the brain and then to find oneself amidst the scenes of the unseen world.

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dense physical body and the astral body. Among the Atlanteans these plexuses—and in fact the whole sympathetic system—were well developed, and through them came pouring the vibrations of the unseen world which made them psychic. The consciousness of an Atlantean was as much centred in his sympathetic system as in his undeveloped brain, and as a result he was not only psychic but much of what is now subconscious with us was conscious with him.

The impressions he received, however, both of this and of the unseen world, were vague and massive, with little of the detail which a trained clairvoyant of the present day would be able to see, using as he does another set of highly specialised centres for clairvoyant purposes, which are connected with the cerebro-spinal nervous system.

THE GROWTH OF INTELLECT

As the centuries rolled on and the intellectual faculties developed, the brain grew in size and complexity, while the activities of the sympathetic nervous system

life after life. This explains why so few people among us to-day are psychic. Sometimes, indeed, dim impressions of impending disaster or sorrow may still pass over these neglected bridges and fill us with a vague uneasiness, but usually we are quite unreceptive.

A TRANSITION STAGE

We are in a transition stage. During this period of intellectual dominance we have closed the avenues of primitive clairvoyance, but have not—except in a few rare cases—opened the channels of the higher clairvoyance. For man, who ever dwells in other worlds beside the physical, was intended to be and will be psychic. And the time is near at hand for many for the awakening of advanced clairvoyance, for their brain and spinal cord are now well evolved and they have developed sufficient mentality and self-control to cope with the problems which will confront them with this next step forward in evolution.

We may go forwards or backwards. If we try to unfold the higher psychic powers we advance; if we attempt to re-awaken

primitive clairvoyance, we retrograde. One sometimes wonders whether those who have plunged so confidently into psychic training realise that nearly all of the methods so popular in Europe and America are those which carry us backwards and retard our evolution? Of course, such physical practices are easier and bring results far more quickly than those which induce higher clairvoyance, but is it so much a question of ease or quickness as of real progress?

ANOTHER SET OF CENTRES

In addition to the sympathetic centres which have just been mentioned, there is also another set which is sometimes used in developing primitive clairvoyance. As we know from our study of physiology, every physical sense-organ is connected by a nerve or nerves with a centre in the brain. What is not so well known, however, is that each such brain-centre has its counterpart in the astral body.

When a beam of light touches the retina of an eye, vibrations are excited which dart over the optic nerve to the opposite hemisphere of the brain, and there stimulate

a certain area of grey cells to increased activity. The impulse does not stop there, however, for the vibrations which have been thus aroused in this part of the brain cause sympathetic vibrations to arise in the corresponding astral centre, and then for the first time we experience a sensation of light and colour. All sensations, as such, are felt in the astral body and not in the physical, for the brain is nothing more than a transmitter. Of course this whole process of transmission is almost instantaneous.

Thus each sense-organ has a brain-centre and an astral-centre connected with it, but the astral-centres themselves are not sense-organs of the astral body in any way. They are simply connections by which vibrations are passed from the brain to the consciousness using it. Yet when certain practices are performed—such as will be described in the next chapter—they can be forced to act as rudimentary astral sense-organs which will feebly respond to the vibrations of the unseen world. When vibrations received in this unnatural way are reflected down into the brain, there is a touch of primitive clairvoyance.

Aryans found and conquered when they migrated into India—sprang from Atlantean stock. But whatever may have been the source of these instructions for psychic development—carried down from century to century in a land where customs never change—they are certainly in opposition to the present trend of evolution, and those who follow them are turning their eyes backwards along the path which has already been trodden and not forwards to the splendid goal which lies ahead.

ANCIENT PRECAUTIONS

In the old days these instructions were imparted by the teacher to his pupil and great care was exercised to see that no harm came while they were being followed. The pupil always remained with the teacher, who guided and counselled as each step was taken. This precaution is unheard of in the West, where it is considered quite sufficient to buy a book of unknown antecedents in a shop, and follow its directions! No wonder so much harm is done.

All the practices which are taught are not good for every one, and it was the function

of the teacher of old to select those most suited to the temperament and bodily conditions of his pupil. For it was known then how easy it is to injure the delicate tissues of the body unless the greatest precautions are taken.

Furthermore in India the physical heredity and bodily magnetism were and are quite different from those in the West. For generations and centuries the diet of the best among the Hindus has been guiltless of flesh food and alcoholic liquors. As a result they can follow with safety certain practices which would be highly dangerous if not fatal to one whose body has become impure through the consumption of meat and alcoholic drink. This fact also has been completely ignored by many would-be psychics in Western lands and as a result there have been many cases of severe nervous breakdown.

SOME CASES OF INJURY

A student of occultism has told me that while he was travelling through America on a long lecturing tour, some twenty-two cases came under his observation of people who

had injured or ruined themselves through unwise psychic development such as is described in the next chapter.

A number of them had so strained their lungs while practising the breathing exercises recommended in several popular books, that they suffered either from internal bleeding or from diseased lungs and chest.

Others had completely wrecked their physical health through over-straining the brain and nerves. A few were in asylums for the insane.

In some cases softening of the brain had taken place—an actual breaking down of the tissue.

Still others had in some way broken or damaged the insulating web described in a previous chapter and as a result had become haunted or obsessed.

One can feel nothing but the utmost pity for such sad cases, but at the same time one realises that if these people had but curbed their impatient desire to become psychic in a few months, and had followed the slower but much safer path leading to higher clairvoyance, they would have been

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healthy and happy men and women to-day, instead of the helpless derelicts that they are. And besides, whatever faculties they succeed in awakening last but for one life only, as the training they undergo affects nothing higher than the physical body, while the higher clairvoyance is a power of the inner man and can never be lost. How true it is that "wisdom builds for the future while ignorance is content with a house of sand."

DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMITIVE CLAIRVOYANCE

THE NECESSITY FOR TRANCE

IN order to sense the swift and subtle vibrations of the unseen world which thrill through space about us, it is necessary to become insensitive to the clamorous and insistent sounds and scenes of this world. A faint melody cannot be heard amidst the roar of a city street; in the rhythmic crash of a great orchestra only a trained ear can follow the notes of a single violin; the light of the stars cannot be seen until the sun goes down.

This insensitiveness can be produced if we are able to throw the body into a condition of trance, by forcibly inhibiting the physical senses and putting the brain in abeyance.

This may be done by mesmeric passes, by hypnotic suggestion, by taking certain

drugs or inhaling stupefying fumes, or by adopting the method of the whirling Dervish, who spins rapidly round and round until his brain loses its responsive power and he falls down in a trance, during which visions are seen.

BREATHING EXERCISES

The way, however, which is common in the East and most widely known in the West, is by means of breathing exercises. In this, the would-be psychic sits or lies down—assuming certain difficult postures which need not be described here—and goes through an intricate process of inhaling his breath, holding it for a definite time and then exhaling it again. The process may be varied by inhaling through one nostril and exhaling through the other, and by mentally picturing the breath as going to one part of the body or another. It is astounding how many different variations of the simple act of breathing have been invented.

THEIR PURPOSE

The ancient Indians who arranged these practices had several ends in view—

(a) they wanted to still their thoughts, (b) to stupefy the brain and (c) to stimulate the flow of certain currents in the body.

(a) Long ago it was noticed that when a person was thinking very deeply or wrapped in meditation, his breathing became slower and fainter and sometimes almost stopped. So the theory arose that if a man were to stop his breathing, his thoughts also would become more quiet and one-pointed. And to some extent this is true, probably owing to the fact that the mind and body have been so long associated that they tend to duplicate each other's actions.

(b) Indian fakirs who have followed this line of physical training for many years are able to hold their breath for an incredibly long time. Naturally during this interval, the blood which has never ceased to circulate among the cells becomes heavily charged with carbon dioxide and, as a result, the brain is soon

stupefied, producing a trance-like condition.

- (c) When, through these practices, the breathing has become rhythmical, it tends to stimulate into greater activity currents of vitality which are ever circulating in the etheric portion of the physical body. This is especially true when the mind strongly pictures the breath as going to various parts of the body; of course the breath itself does not go, but these currents do, and they are thereby forced along hitherto unused channels, with the result that some of the old sympathetic centres are revived and become active as psychic channels.

THEIR RESULTS

Unfortunately, when these old centres are again stirred to activity and the vibrations of the unseen world flood the waking consciousness of the would-be psychic, he finds himself unable to control them or to shut out of his thoughts the sights and sounds which thrust themselves upon him. This might not be so

bad if what he saw and heard were pleasant, but nearly always they are exactly the reverse. He is obliged to witness the most revolting scenes and listen to the vilest language and suggestions, because he has tapped the lowest astral levels, where such unclean influences reside.

All his energies have been turned towards developing his physical organs sufficiently to receive astral vibrations; he has not realised that unless his consciousness is trained he will be a victim and not a master of the forces which are received. Intelligence must keep pace with bodily development, else a person is swept away by currents he cannot control.

Of course, there are right kinds of breathing exercises—such as are taught in gymnasiums—which are beneficial to the health, but they are different in their purpose and action from those which have just been described, and do not induce either primitive clairvoyance or diseases of the chest.

CONCENTRATING ON THE SOLAR PLEXUS

Another method of awakening psychism is that of concentrating upon the solar plexus:

This sympathetic nervous centre has been called the second brain and other fanciful names, and a good deal of harmful twaddle has been written about its awakening. People for some reason will not believe that it is not wise to tamper with their bodies unless they know exactly what they are doing.

When a man concentrates upon his solar plexus—thinks intently about it and wills that it become active—he immediately sends a rush of vitality in that direction. Sometimes the astral centre connected with it is stimulated and then the experimenter gains a certain amount of primitive clairvoyance—that is, he is able to receive a number of vague and little-understood impressions from the unseen world.

But usually the vitality simply congests there and causes a great deal of harm. This plexus is an important one, for it controls, or is connected with, practically all of the digestive organs. When it becomes congested the digestion suffers, and sometimes even the kidneys are upset. To complicate matters, the average person when

he begins to concentrate upon this plexus, usually directs his attention to other organs as well, because of his ignorance of anatomy. As a result he is apt to throw the whole digestive tract into nervous disorder.

When he interferes with the sympathetic nervous system, whose workings should go on quite automatically below the level of brain consciousness, he runs a grave risk of causing incurable nervous diseases, of which one type brings on a black melancholy and abysmal despair. If the practice is carried to extreme it may even produce partial paralysis.

CRYSTAL GAZING

Still another method is to stare at a crystal ball, at the tip of the nose, or at a white spot on a black background. The purpose of this practice is twofold. First, to reduce the brain to a condition of partial paralysis and thereby bring about a state of trance, and second, to so stimulate the astral-centre connected with the eyes that it will commence to act as a temporary astral sense-organ.

When one gazes intently at a white spot without winking, the retinal cells become greatly fatigued and eventually the spot disappears because the retina is no longer sensitive. If the practice is continued the fatigue spreads inward until the optic nerve itself becomes deadened; finally the sight-area of grey cells becomes partially paralysed. When this takes place the person has actually hypnotised himself, and in this condition, when the brain is dulled to outer impacts, it sometimes happens that visions are seen. But more often no results are obtained.

This exercise, as I have already said, has a tendency to excite the astral centre and cause it to receive astral vibrations which are then reflected into the brain. But when visions are seen in this way they are quite unreliable, because the organ through which they come is unfitted for such work.

This sort of psychic training is not at all to be commended, for the brain paralysis which it induces may become permanent. In addition to this the strain

on the eyes is terrible and may cause dimness of sight or even blindness after long practice. Frequently the eyes lose their power of adjustment and become crossed.

WORK WITHOUT PROFIT

As has been stated, a number of these exercises induce a state of trance by the numbing effect they have upon the brain. During trance, as in sleep, the man is outside his physical body and is more or less actively conscious in his astral body. If he were wide awake and fully active in the unseen world it might be possible for him to secure valuable information and impress it upon his brain.

But our would-be psychic has not endeavoured to unfold the powers of his mind; he has been entirely occupied with physical development. So when he leaves his body during trance, he drifts about in the astral world and is only vaguely conscious of his surroundings; upon his return he is no wiser than before.

It is evident that it is better to have nothing to do with these physical exercises which lead to the awakening of

primitive clairvoyance. We may be tempted at times by glittering advertisements, alluring promises, and glowing descriptions, to commence their practice, but if we once realise the worthlessness and danger of their results, and the unhappiness which such rudimentary and uncontrolled faculties bring upon their possessors, we shall never let temptation pass into action.

CHAPTER VIII

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER CLAIRVOYANCE

THE WAY OF THE OCCULTIST

THE methods which have been described up to this point have all endeavoured to force the body to respond to astral vibrations by the stimulating action of physical exercises. But as we have seen, the practices are dangerous, the results meagre, and worst of all, the character and mentality of the experimenter are left entirely uncultivated. Though he may be slightly psychic, he is no better *as a man* than before; nay, sometimes he even degenerates, because he could not resist the temptations by which he was assailed.

The occultist, realising that in this case 'the longest way round is the shortest way home,' is not so short-sighted; he is willing to take any amount of trouble in order to succeed. But the success he seeks is

not one of a few short years, but for all the lives he will live in the future.

From his studies he has learned of his own inherent divinity and of the resplendent goal of human evolution, and he has deliberately decided not to follow his own selfish, personal inclinations any longer, but to use every faculty he possesses to co-operate with the forces which are helping humanity to hasten to the summit.

To reach this goal, humanity must not only develop moral strength but must become emotionally beautiful, mentally powerful and spiritually responsive. The aspirant who throws himself whole-heartedly into the work of awakening these splendid qualities in others and in himself, and is so filled with the joy of serving his brothers that he forgets all about his own progress, is a long way towards the stage at which the faculties of the higher clairvoyance will appear. For the coming race will be psychic, and the aspirant, as he labours at the refinement of his character, is building himself into the likeness of the man of the future.

ANTICIPATING EVOLUTION

The occultist in his development is merely anticipating evolution. Many centuries hence the slow upward sweep of evolution will have carried the race to the level where the brain is sufficiently developed and sensitive to respond to a much greater range of vibrations than it does to-day. When that stage is reached, man will be clairvoyant and fully aware of the astral world which surrounds him. Even now many children are clairvoyant until they are six or seven years old, when they lose that faculty because of unheeding and ignorant parents and of faulty training.

This clairvoyant development will be brought about, not by following any of the methods which are necessary to-day, but by the natural growth of the nervous mechanism, through the pressure exerted by the steadily unfolding powers of the emotions, mind and will. Increased and intensified inward growth inevitably augments the capacity of the brain, and as the race slowly awakens one quality of character after another through the course of thousands

of years, the nervous system becomes ever more and more responsive.

We may either trudge slowly along with the masses until in some future incarnation we arrive at that level of development and find ourselves equipped with a clairvoyant nervous mechanism in common with our fellows, or we may now, by strenuous efforts, forge quickly ahead and anticipate evolution by building up within ourselves in this life the qualities which will distinguish the man of the future.

Such evolution is not a question of time; it is entirely a matter of inward growth. If we have the power and determination to leap ahead and outstrip our plodding fellow-travellers, it is inevitable that the higher clairvoyance will appear. Our own weakness and lack of perseverance are the only bars to such a consummation.

MIND THE BUILDER

The fundamental law underlying the development of higher clairvoyance may be stated in these words :

The demands of the consciousness will be met by the growth of the body. The reason

why we are not all fully clairvoyant now is that our consciousness is only partially and unevenly developed, and is therefore making but few demands upon the brain and nervous system. The average man is not living up to even the present capacity of his brain, much less forcing it to increased growth and sensitiveness.

As yet we hardly appreciate the tremendous power possessed by the mind to mould and even to build the nervous mechanism. Possibly our slowness to grasp this fact is due to the feeble influence exerted by our own hazy and unregulated ways of thinking. But if we could observe the hidden workings of a highly trained and powerful mind, we should then see the currents of force rushing down into the brain; and understand how thought-power produces brain-power.

If we open a good book on physiology and study the illustrations of the cells found in the cerebral hemispheres, it will be seen that from each cell-body project many branches or dendrons which form a dense, interlacing net-work in the grey matter.

Dendrons serve the same purpose as insulated wires, and when such connections between cells are multiplied, the thought capacity of the brain increases.

When currents pour down from the intensely active mind into the brain, the cells in the grey matter are greatly stimulated and immediately begin to send out more branches, which naturally increase the responsiveness of the brain. (The question whether the cells themselves become more numerous has not yet been determined, but it seems possible that such is the case). In this way, by deliberately training the mind, we can greatly enlarge the capacity of the brain—a most decided step towards the acquirement of clairvoyance.

Then, too, we shall find in our book on physiology the interesting fact that each intellectual faculty of the mind is associated with a certain little specialised area of grey cells through which that faculty can express itself in the brain. Suppose we are acquainted with two languages; in our brain on the surface of one of the hemispheres there would be a writing-area, a reading-area

and a speaking-area connected with each language, or six in all. Every other faculty we possess is similarly equipped—singing, playing, drawing, painting, mathematical ability, and so on.

These areas were specialised by the influence of the mind during the period that we were developing those intellectual faculties. The study of a new subject is accompanied by the modification of a certain group of brain cells. Without the mental effort on our part the faculty would not appear, nor would the grey cells have been changed. So it is evident once more that the mind is a powerful builder, and that if we train our consciousness we shall at the same time develop our brain.

THE LAW OF REPETITION

The training of the occultist is thoroughly scientific and unfailingly effective, if carried out with earnestness and perseverance. It is based upon the fact that an act repeated again and again becomes a habit, and that a thought held constantly before the mind becomes an inherent quality of character. This is known as the law of repetition.

In ancient scriptures it is proclaimed that 'man becomes that upon which he thinks,' and in our own time advanced thinkers are instilling the same profound truth by insisting that 'as a man thinketh so is he.' Social position, clothes or a university education cannot make a man; thoughts and emotions alone are the builders of character.

Now the occultist does not spring from the type of man who simply reads such statements and nods his head in approval; he is one who applies them in his own life. In fact, this is always the mark of the man who is in earnest; he practises what others merely read.

The occultist makes use of this law of repetition in a thoroughly scientific fashion; he applies it to the purification of his body, to the culture of his emotions and to the training of his mind. We shall take up some of the details now of occult training and see how this law is utilised.

PRELIMINARY STEPS

The physical body is largely a creature of habit. It has become accustomed to certain food, to three or four meals a day,

to a great deal of exercise or to none at all, to particular forms of clothing and to countless little habits which make up the routine of a day.

The aspirant who desires occult development must carefully go over these little traits and customs of physical existence and ruthlessly eliminate those which are not in accord with wholesome common-sense and the hidden laws of nature.

One of the first things that a budding occultist must do is to adopt a pure and sensible diet. Putting aside all our prejudices and facing the facts squarely, it is evident that a diet composed of flesh, wrenched from the limbs of slaughtered animals, is not the best that the world can supply. Such flesh is oftentimes diseased, always filled with waste products from the blood of the animal, frequently on the way to decay, and completely saturated with the passions, fear and terror of the animal from which it came. To put such material into our body and then expect it to be sensitive to the subtlest of vibrations is, to say the least, somewhat absurd.

And in fact, the experience of the occultists of many centuries points unfalteringly to the conclusion that a human body fed on corpses—however carefully disguised under other names—cannot stand the strain of occult development. Such a poorly prepared body would break and become a nervous wreck when once the higher consciousness began to dawn within the brain.

And so in all lands and times occultists have insisted that the diet must consist of cereals, fruits, nuts and vegetables without the slightest trace of flesh, fowl or fish. Sentiment alone does not dictate this requirement; it is a mature conclusion born of wisdom and long experience on the part of many teachers.

It may be that one's body will rebel at first against such a change in its habits. Do not be disheartened; go slowly in substituting one food for another, and you will be astonished how easily your body adapts itself to the new régime.

Alcohol in all its forms must also be eliminated from the diet, and medicine which contains it should not be taken. It

may be added, that if one lead the healthy life of an occultist, medicine of any kind will no longer be required. The effect of alcohol upon the brain-cells and the pituitary body is marked, and its habitual use, even in small quantities, absolutely prevents the awakening of the higher capacities of the brain, for if the grey matter become deadened or sluggish, clairvoyance is impossible.

The occultist pays attention to the little things of life. He watches his habits and prevents any impure desire from arising in his mind; he is careful by means of frequent baths to keep his body scrupulously clean so as to maintain his magnetic purity; he takes sufficient exercise to keep his muscles and organs in perfect condition; he never allows wool to touch his skin, nor permits his clothing to be made so tight as to constrict his body in any way.

In these and in several other ways the occultist regulates the physical side of his life and seeks to bring it into harmony with the laws of nature. But though his habits are so carefully ordered, he never allows himself to become morbid; rather he

always tries to live a life of perfect health and whole-hearted happiness from which joy radiates as light from the midday sun.

DAILY TRAINING

The occultist does not shun the society of mankind nor withdraw to the mountains or the desert to pursue his training. The qualities he wishes to develop can be most easily cultivated while moving among men and women and engaged in the tasks and trials which each day brings.

Among the beautiful traits of character which the aspirant should earnestly seek to acquire, none is more important than that of unselfishness. It has truly been said many times, that selfishness is the root of all evil, and as we glance at human life around us, we cannot help but notice how much cruelty, misery and vice have arisen from this one cause.

In one way or another, nearly all of us are tainted with selfishness, and the wisest way to get rid of that stain upon our character is not to bewail its presence, but to go on and serve others until we feel that the stain has been removed.

of others continually, plan how to help them, seize every opportunity to render some little service. It matters not how small the act or whether it is noticed; our attitude alone is important—to us. Watch for tired faces and send thoughts of encouragement; watch for sorrowful eyes and fill the heart of their owner with peace; watch for those who are weak and charge them with renewed strength. In this way we can serve every moment of every day. And we should serve gladly, not as a gloomy duty, but because we could not do otherwise and remain true to ourselves.

As we thus go about our daily duties and seek with all the energy of our nature to enter into the lives of others and to see things from their point of view, there slowly dawns within our heart a very real and deep love for our fellows; a love which seeks for virtues and not for faults; a love which leads us to sympathise with every budding aspiration no matter how poorly expressed.

And out of all this unselfish striving, this thoughtful service, this love and

sympathy, will spring an inward intuition which will lead the aspirant far along the path leading to illumination. For he is learning his first lesson in seeing the God which dwells in every form.

As the vision of the occultist must be keen enough to pierce the veils and delusions of the larger world, he must train himself to be utterly truthful in all things, for an untruth is like a shadow falling before the inward sight. His thoughts must not deviate from fact nor be distorted by prejudice, and he must train himself calmly to search each statement for the truth it contains, no matter from what source it comes. His speech must be accurate and free from exaggeration and his actions deliberate and thoughtful.

There are other qualities also for which the aspirant should strive—purity, gentleness, courtesy, patience, steadfastness, courage, self-reliance, loyalty, devotion, self-collectedness; and at the back of all an indomitable will.

If these ideals of character are constantly held before the mind, if they are yearned for as being wholly desirable, if we

constantly practise them and set our will to gain them, then there is no power on earth that can prevent us from growing into their likeness.

CONCENTRATION

Our progress is greatly accelerated if we pay attention to what we are doing. When we turn our attention so keenly and intently upon one idea or act that other unrelated thoughts or acts cannot intrude, we are concentrating. This is one of the most valuable powers that can be possessed by a human being, whether an occultist or not.

In any line of work the ability to direct the whole force of the mind to a single problem and solve it before taking up another is of enormous utility. The most successful men are those who have developed this faculty of one-pointedness in handling each task as it appears.

There is but one way to cultivate this power to concentrate—by constant practice. This priceless faculty cannot be given; it must be built by each man for himself. And there is no better way to develop it

than to pay close attention to everything which we are now doing from day to day, and try to do the work which comes to us in the most skilful, decisive and thoughtful way that lies within our power. There should be no wasteful hurry nor careless sloth; each act should be performed with calm deliberation and yet with all our might, with the ever-present wish to do the work as perfectly as we can.

Splendid training, equally to the man of the world as to the occultist! To develop this faculty is to bring the restless mind under control, and with this control there comes a sense of strength and self-command which no words can describe. The mind which formerly swept us off our feet by its ceaseless activity is now a trained and valuable instrument, which we can direct and handle with skill and precision.

MEDITATION

The law of repetition is further utilised by the occultist in his training, not only to assist him in conquering his mind but also in building qualities into his character. Meditation is the act of turning

the concentrated mind at a particular time each day, not upon outside things, but upon some quality which we want to acquire or upon some spiritual problem which we wish to solve.

To meditate, a quiet spot is chosen, and then—usually each morning after an early bath—we should sit down with back erect and hands upon the knees, and deliberately place before our mental vision some thought whose depths we wish to sound—a sentence from an inspired writer or a verse from some sacred scripture. We must not permit other ideas or mental pictures to creep in, but successfully to prevent this will take long practice. We must cling to this one thought, examine it from every aspect, enter into its very nature and drain it dry of meaning.

Until one has tried it, it is hard to realise how much spiritual insight can be gained during these few minutes of sustained and strenuous concentration directed towards some great spiritual concept. New vistas of unsuspected beauty open before our mental gaze, new relations appear to link

this thought to others, new depths of meaning are seen of whose very presence we did not dream before. Amid the thronging interests and impressions of the day such deeper knowledge cannot be gained; it is often in these moments of strenuous silence that true insight comes.

A virtue may be chosen as the subject of part of our meditation. Let us take, for example, the quality of gentleness, and decide to meditate on that every day for a month. Each morning we recall to mind, as we sit quietly in the silence, the beauty and charm of gentleness, how it is equally becoming to the strongest man and to the loveliest woman. We should picture ourselves as endowed with this splendid trait of character and moving through the scenes of the coming day, gentle in speech, in act, in thought.

Then when the time of meditation is over and we go out into the whirl of life, we find it ever easier to recall to mind the thoughts of the morning and put them into practice. Thus, we should successively meditate upon the different virtues which

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Then when the time of meditation is over and we go out into the whirl of life, we find it ever easier to recall to mind the thoughts of the morning and put them into practice. Thus, we should successively meditate upon the different virtues which

we wish to acquire. In this way, by the scientific application of the law of repetition, one quality after another may be woven into our character, carrying us nearer and nearer the time when the higher clairvoyant faculties can appear in the developed brain.

For all this time, as we have been developing quality after quality of the character and strengthening power after power of the mind, our brain has been quietly changing, growing more sensitive and responsive, through the clean food of which its tissues have been built and because of the currents which constantly pour down and stimulate the branching of the cells.

CONTEMPLATION

A special type of meditation is that called contemplation, and it is by this practice that we awaken spiritual aspiration. To contemplate, we hold before the mental vision some glorious ideal of spirituality incarnate in flesh—a Buddha, a Christ, a Shri Krishna, a Master. We should picture to ourselves the wondrous qualities which such exalted Beings show forth—the all-embracing love for every creature, the

infinite compassion, the unruffled calm, the divine wisdom and far-reaching insight, the perfect comprehension of every human need and aspiration, the superb strength and adamant will—and as we picture we should let our hearts open out to the influence of these mighty Ones and long with all the intensity of our nature to become like Them, to reflect in some dim degree the glory of Their life. As we thus contemplate the highest ideal of which we can conceive, we gradually are moulded into the same lines of spiritual beauty and power; we are ‘changed into the same image from glory to glory.’

We must never forget that psychism is not spirituality. Psychism is a perceptive power of the consciousness working through the brain; spirituality is the realisation of the divine Matrix of which every living creature is a part, of the one Life which links each separate life to all.

THE AWAKENING OF CLAIRVOYANCE

As a man continues to meditate morning after morning, and remains undaunted by a thousand failures, he gradually

comes able to still all thoughts except the one upon which his full attention is fixed. Eventually, after long practice, he finds it possible to drop even this thought, though still maintaining the attitude of keen attention, of intense, positive concentration—but with empty mind. *If this attitude can be sustained even for a few minutes, undisturbed by impressions from without or thoughts from within, the consciousness slips quietly out of the brain, and the aspirant suddenly finds himself fully conscious in the unseen world. This is the dawning of the wider consciousness, the long-sought awakening of the higher clairvoyance, when the larger consciousness and that of the brain become as one.*

A SPECIAL METHOD

There is still another method by which the highest type of psychism can be awakened, but of this little may be said. Its details will never be published and it is only mentioned here to make this manual complete. It is always taught orally by Teacher to pupil, and unless the pupil is ready the Teacher is never found.

The secrecy surrounding its instructions is for the purpose of protecting mankind, and not from any selfish motive. If by any means its practices could be discovered and followed by a man who was not prepared physically, morally and mentally, that unfortunate person would either kill himself, be nervously wrecked for life, or turned into a sensual monster by the downward deviation of the force which he had aroused but could not control.

Briefly, this method develops psychic faculties of the highest order by arousing a certain powerful force—known as serpent-fire or kundalinī—which slumbers at the base of the spine. When this is once awakened and can be properly directed, it rushes up the spine and vivifies certain centres found in the physical body.

These centres, which resemble shallow whirling vortices about two inches in diameter and are channels for forces pouring in from the astral world, are found on the surface of the *etheric* part of the body, in the neighbourhood of the base of the spine, the spleen, the navel,

the heart, the throat, between the eyebrows and at the top of the head.

When the serpent-fire has flashed through them in a certain order which varies with each type of person, they immediately become responsive to the vibrations of the unseen world and in this way perfect clairvoyance is developed.

But unless the man has long been utterly free from the slightest trace of sexual passion, the danger he runs in arousing this force is exceedingly grave, for it may rush downwards instead of upwards, and then his sexual impulses become so irresistible that he would be hurled into the wildest excesses.

This method is a short-cut to psychism, but as so very few of us are utterly passionless, it is one that we should not seek. We should never, therefore, under any circumstances follow any instructions—unless given by a Master or one of His pupils—which are supposed to arouse this force, but should turn all our energies to the wiser method of becoming clairvoyant through daily practice, meditation and contemplation.

CHAPTER IX

AN AFFIRMATION

No heights are too great for man to gain if he but set his will to reach them, for there is a divinity within each one of us to which all things are possible. Our human frailties, our weaknesses, our ignorance and faint-heartedness are due to the unmastered bodies in which we dwell.

But as life after life is spent in this great school we call the Earth, we gradually learn to bend these garments of flesh and subtle matter to our will. Long ago we were savages grubbing for roots in the forest. The future shall witness the day when we shall become as translucent as the Holy Grail to the radiant Light within.

And yet in all this *we* do not change; the change takes place within our bodies.

Growth is not the acquirement of something from without; it is the awakening of powers which are slumbering within. As the great teacher Experience arouses these forces by the demands of physical life, they at first appear dimly and darkly in the form of selfishness, lust and brutality—like beams of light struggling through soot-laden glass.

But as we evolve power after power from within, and build up one beautiful trait of character after another, the light within is able to shine more clearly through the bodies we wear, the outer consciousness approaches nearer to the statue of the inner God. Every lovely quality we develop, every capacity of the mind we unfold, every spiritual aspiration we awaken, brings us closer to that glorious consummation when the inward man shall be revealed in spiritual splendour in his temple of flesh.

So take heart and strive ever upwards; the inward God dwells in every one of us, whether we be young or old, ignorant or wise, stained or pure. If you have fallen, be of good courage, for there

is no depth out of which you cannot climb. If you are weak, seek earnestly and strength will come, and though you fail a thousand times there is no failure except in ceasing to strive. If you are young, be patient, for experience will bring you wisdom. And in all things be of good cheer and rejoice in every shining day; if sorrow comes seek for the lessons it brings, if happiness be yours share it with your brothers. Remember that this world revolves in the glowing heart of a divine Intelligence, which wraps us all about with Its infinite compassion and wisdom. Have no fear then, cast aside depression and sorrow, lift up your eyes to the Light which never dies, and fill your heart with the 'Peace which passeth understanding.'

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